

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 095379 TOSEC 040019

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: SOVIET HIGHLIGHTS, APRIL 5-12

1. TASS REPORTED THE THRUST OF YOUR SPEECH TO THE NEWSPAPER EDITORS MORE OR LESS FACTUALLY BUT COMMENTED THAT US DEFENSE PLANNING STILL INDICATES A SEARCH FOR UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE EVEN IF YOU DID CLAIM TO WANT AN EARLY SALT AGREEMENT.

2. BREZHNEV'S TRIP TO THE SOVIET FAR EAST SERVED BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PURPOSES AND ENHANCED HIS HEALTH IMAGE TO BOOT. HIS VLADIVOSTOK ADDRESS SEEMED INTENDED TO ANSWER THE PRESIDENT'S WAKE FOREST SPEECH AND TO SET THE STAGE FOR YOUR MOSCOW DISCUSSIONS LATER THIS MONTH.

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3. TASS ANNOUNCED YOUR IMPENDING VISIT FACTUALLY, BUT CRITICISM OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE PRESIDENT'S POLICIES CONTINUES MUCH AS BEFORE. YET, THE SOVIETS ARE CONTINUING TO PREPARE FOR A VARIETY OF DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS -- ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN, ANTI-SATELLITES TESTING -- AND ARE TALKING POSITIVELY ABOUT TRADE PROSPECTS.

4. THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF MENGISTU'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IMPLIED KREMLIN ENDORSEMENT OF HIS PLANS FOR GAINING MILITARY CONTROL OF ERITREA. AT THE SAME TIME, MOSCOW REMAINS NONCOMMITTAL ON THE LATEST WESTERN PROPOSALS FOR NAMIBIA AND HAS TURNED DOWN THE UN REQUEST FOR SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL.

5. BREZHNEV'S ROAD PERFORMANCE

IMPLICIT IN BREZHNEV'S BRAVURA PERFORMANCE DURING HIS WHISTLE-STOP TOUR WAS THE DEMONSTRATION OF HIS PHYSICAL CAPACITY TO SERVE AS NATIONAL LEADER. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WERE SIGNS THAT HE WAS HUSBANDING HIS STRENGTH -- THE BREVITY OF HIS REMARKS AND HIS FAILURE TO VISIT A PET PROJECT, THE BAM RAILWAY SITE.

6. DOMESTIC THEMES WHICH MAY WELL APPEAR AT THE RUMORED APRIL PLENUM PREOCCUPIED BREZHNEV AT MOST STOPS: LABOR MORALE AND INCENTIVES SUCH AS BETTER HOUSING, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND FOOD SUPPLY. AT A VLADIVOSTOK MEETING HE STRESSED THAT PRIVATELY RAISED PRODUCE MUST BE INCREASED "TO THE MAXIMUM." IN A RELATED MOVE TO ALLEVIATE THE MEAT SHORTAGE, RURAL BUILDERS WERE ORDERED TO SWITCH FROM APARTMENT BUILDINGS TO COTTAGES WITH GARDEN PLOTS.

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7. THE NEUTRON BOMB

THE SOVIET PRESS CALLED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO POSTPONE PRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON BOMB A MERE DELAYING TACTIC, PART OF A WARHEAD MODERNIZATION PROCESS. THEY LAMENTED HIS FAILURE TO MENTION BREZHNEV'S MUTUAL RENUNCIATION PROPOSAL. (THE CONTINUING CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BOMB WILL PROBABLY GET NEW IMPETUS AT NEXT WEEK'S MEETING OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IN PRAGUE.)

8. SOVIET MEDIA EXPLOITATION OF BREZHNEV'S DISCUSSION (IN HIS VLADIVOSTOK SPEECH) OF THE USSR'S STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US ALSO HAS TENDED TO FOCUS MAINLY ON THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE. THEY HAVE PORTRAYED BREZHNEV'S DISARMAMENT STANCE PRIMARILY IN TERMS OF ACHIEVING A BAN ON PRODUCTION OF THAT WEAPON, WITHOUT MAKING ANY SOVIET CONCESSIONS.

9. CRITICISM AND CONGENIALITY

TASS BERATED AMBASSADOR TOON FOR HIS "STRANGE BEHAVIOR" IN DISCUSSING DISSENT IN THE USSR IN A VOA INTERVIEW

AND SCORED CIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR CARLUCCI FOR CRITICIZING  
SOVIET-CUBAN PENETRATION OF AFRICA.

10. FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER PATOLICHEV, ON THE OTHER HAND,  
WAS RELATIVELY CONGENIAL WHILE TALKING TO THE AMBASSADOR  
LAST WEEK. HE REFRAINED FROM DEBATING MFN OR READING  
POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS INTO THE POSTPONEMENT OF COMMERCE  
SECRETARY KREPS' VISIT TO THE USSR.

11. FAR EAST

BREZHNEV'S ONLY PUBLIC ALLUSIONS TO CHINA DURING HIS  
FAR EASTERN TRIP WERE INDIRECT REFERENCES TO THE USSR'S  
NEED TO DEFEND ITSELF "WEST AND EAST". IN ANY EVENT, THE  
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MILITARY EXERCISE AT Khabarovsk SERVED TO UNDERSCORE  
MOSCOW'S UNCHANGED ADAMANCY ON THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH  
PEKING. THE IMPENDING SIGNATURE OF THE 1978 BILATERAL  
TRADE AGREEMENT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT NEITHER SIDE BELIEVES  
THAT THE RECENTLY HEIGHTENED POLEMICS WILL LEAD TO ANY  
SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

12. AFRICA

THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING MENGISTU'S LENGTHY  
STAY IN THE USSR MADE NO REFERENCE TO ERITREA. HOWEVER,  
THE EXPLICIT SUPPORT GIVEN ETHIOPIA'S "TERRITORIAL  
INTEGRITY" AND THE TOUGHER MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE ERITREAN  
GUERRILLAS IMPLIED KREMLIN ENDORSEMENT OF MENGISTU'S  
MILITARY PLANS TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE PROVINCE. LARGE-  
SCALE ETHIOPIAN TROOP TRANSFERS TO THE AREA ARE UNDERWAY,  
BUT THERE IS STILL NO HARD EVIDENCE OF THE CUBAN BUILDUP  
REPORTED BY ERITREAN SOURCES. MEANWHILE, THE SEA AND AIR-  
LIFT GOES ON, AND THE FLOATING SOVIET DRYDOCK MOVED FROM  
BERBERA TO ADEN LAST WINTER HAS NOW APPEARED IN ETHIOPIAN  
WATERS.

13. SOVIET DIPLOMATS ARE AVOIDING ANY DISCUSSION OF THE  
LATEST WESTERN PROPOSALS ON NAMIBIA, BUT THE MEDIA ARE  
CLAIMING THAT WESTERN DIPLOMACY ON RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA  
AIMS AT INSTALLING PUPPET GOVERNMENTS IN BOTH STATES.

14. MIDDLE EAST

THE SOVIETS HAVE TURNED DOWN THE UN REQUEST FOR  
SOVIET MILITARY OBSERVERS IN UNIFIL BUT HAVE NOT YET  
INDICATED HOW THEY WILL REACT WHEN UNIFIL FUNDING COMES  
BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL LATER THIS MONTH.

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15. DISSIDENCE: TREASON CASE

THE CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE FOREIGN CONTACTS WITH SOVIET DISSIDENTS CONTINUED WITH THE APRIL 10 ANNOUNCEMENT OF A GUILTY VERDICT FOR ONE L. LUBMAN OF LENINGRAD ON TREASON CHARGES. NO SENTENCE WAS ANNOUNCED, BUT TASS INDICATED THAT HE HAD PASSED CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES TO A FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE PURPORTEDLY THROUGH AN NTS (NATIONAL LABOR SOLIDARISTS) COURIER ARRESTED LAST YEAR.

16. EMIGRATION

THE HIGH RATE OF JEWISH EMIGRATION CONTINUED IN MARCH AND IS 68 PERCENT ABOVE THE LEVEL FOR THE FIRST 3 MONTHS OF 1977. THE NUMBER OF VIENNA ARRIVALS (2,038) IS THE HIGHEST FIGURE SINCE JANUARY 1974. CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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